

CLAIMS

1. An information display/input device comprising:
display means for displaying image information and/or character information;
pressure detection means arranged on the surface of the display means to detect the pressure applied to the display means; and
display/input control means for reflecting the signal detected by the pressure detection means to the selection of the image information being displayed on and/or the input of characters to the display means;
the display/input control means being adapted to assign virtual input keys to be used to input characters to part of the pressure detection means for key arrangement and display only markers indicating reference positions of the virtual input keys on the display means.
2. The device according to claim 1, wherein the display/input control means is adapted to alter the positions to which the virtual input keys are assigned according to the positions where the markers are being displayed.
3. The device according to claim 1, wherein, when pressure is not detected by the pressure detection means for a predetermined period of time, the display/input control means makes the virtual input keys translucent and visibly displays them.
4. The device according to claim 3, wherein, when pressure is detected continuously for a predetermined period of time on any of the virtual input keys, the

display/input control means makes the virtual input keys invisible except the markers.

5. The device according to claim 1, wherein the display/input control means is adapted to assign the virtual input keys to the pressure detection means with dimensions corresponding to the gap separating the markers and alter the key size of the virtual input keys to make it similar to the marker intervals.

6. The device according to claim 1, wherein, when pressure is detected at a position displaced from the virtual input keys assigned to the pressure detection means for a predetermined number of times, the display/input control means alters the key intervals to make the virtual input keys accommodate the positional displacement.

7. The device according to claim 1, further comprising:

a mechanical keyboard; and

signal conversion means being provided to convert the input signal from the mechanical keyboard and the input signal from the virtual input keys into a common keyboard signal.

8. An information display/input method for a graphic user interface for contact inputs to the display means of an information display/input device comprising display means for displaying image information and/or character information and pressure detection means arranged on the surface of the display means to detect the pressure applied to and the spot of pressure application on the display means, the method comprising:

a display/input control step of reflecting the signal detected by the pressure

detection means to the selection of the image information being displayed on and/or the input of characters to the display means;

virtual input keys to be used to input characters being assigned to part of the pressure detection means for key arrangement and only markers indicating respective reference positions of the virtual input keys being displayed on the display means in the display/input control step.

9. The method according to claim 8, wherein the positions to which the virtual input keys are assigned are altered according to the positions where the markers are being displayed in the display/input control step.

10. The method according to claim 8, wherein, when pressure is not detected by the pressure detection means for a predetermined period of time, the virtual input keys are made translucent and visibly displayed in the display/input control step.

11. The method according to claim 10, wherein, when pressure is detected continuously for a predetermined period of time on any of the virtual input keys, the virtual input keys are made invisible except the markers in the display/input control step.

12. The method according to claim 8, wherein the virtual input keys are assigned to the pressure detection means with dimensions corresponding to the gap separating the markers and the key size of the virtual input keys are altered to make it similar to the marker intervals in the display/input control step.

13. The method according to claim 8, wherein, when pressure is detected at a

position displaced from the virtual input keys assigned to the pressure detection means for a predetermined number of times, the key intervals are altered to make the virtual input keys accommodate the positional displacement in the display/input control step.

14. The method according to claim 8, wherein
the device further comprises a mechanical keyboard; and
the method further comprising a signal conversion step of converting the input signal from the mechanical keyboard and the input signal from the virtual input keys into a common keyboard signal.

15. An information processing device comprising:
a display/input section having display means for displaying image information and/or character information and pressure detection means arranged on the surface of the display means to detect the pressure applied to and the spot of pressure application on the display means; and

display/input control means for reflecting the signal detected by the pressure detection means to the selection of the image information being displayed on and/or the input of characters to the display means;

the display/input control means assigning virtual input keys to be used to input characters to part of the pressure detection means for key arrangement and displaying only markers indicating respective reference positions of the virtual input keys on the display means.